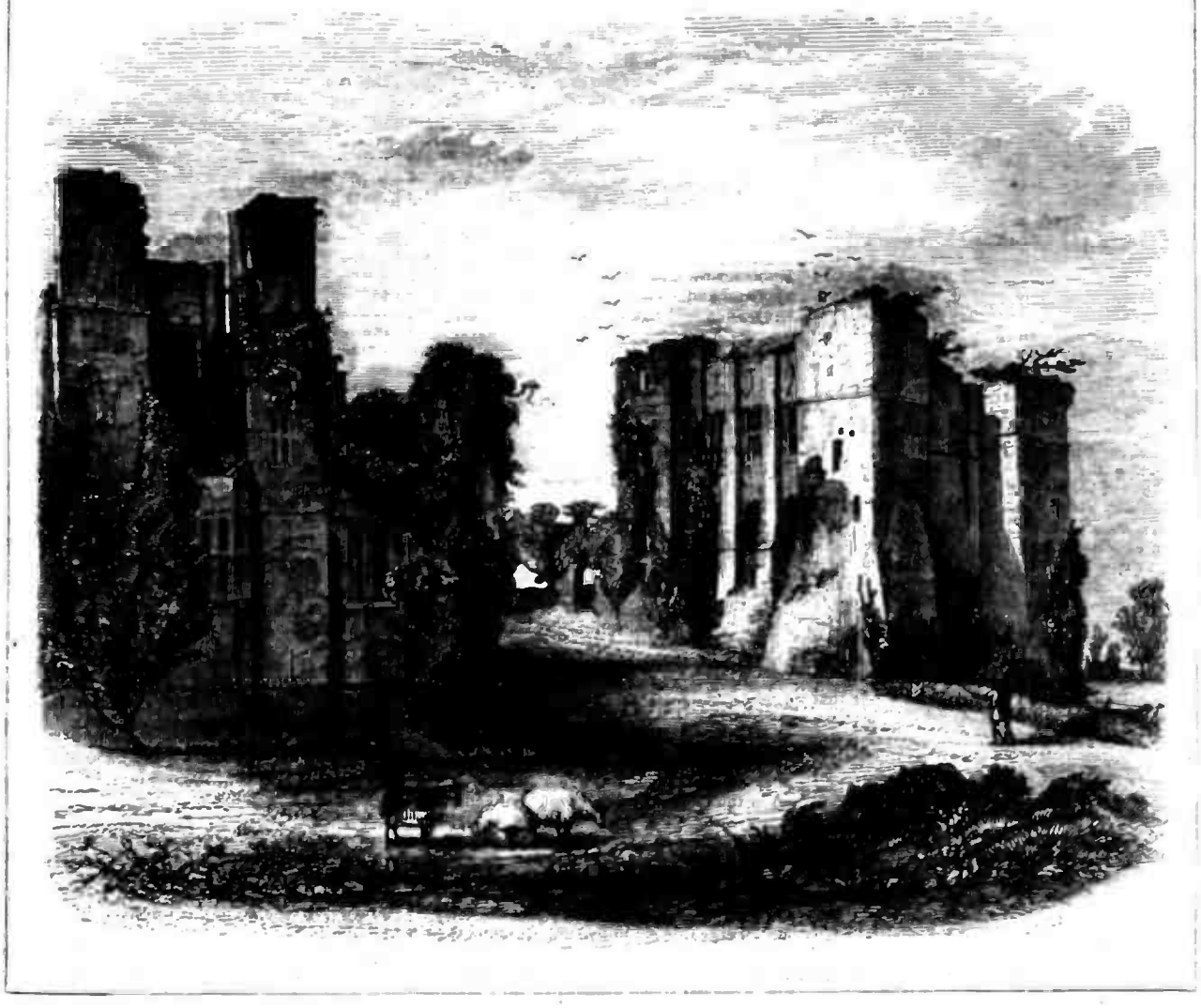
VIEW OF THE KEEP, KENILWORTH CASTLE.*



THE LATEST EXCAVATIONS AT SALONA, —DALMATIA.—[MAY, 1847.]

A NEW POMPEII.

THE systematic excavations of *Salona* cannot, as *some* say, be quite compared with those of Pompeii; still they are among the finest things attempted of late. This however, like so many other things, is not owing to any society, but to one man, Professor Abbate Carrara of Spalatro. Salona was, during Roman dominion, the capital of Dalmatia, and Constantine Porphyrogenitus estimates its extent at half that of Constantinople. Up to the end of the fifth century, art and civilization flourished on this part of the Dalmatian coast, which was, therefore, called *Dalmatia felix*. But in the year 639, Salona was taken by the Avari, and the palace of Diocletian converted into a shelter for fugitives. From that period up to the times of Charlemagne, all remained in confusion, as the barbarian Avares had destroyed all Roman cities. But even the art-period of that monarch was but of short duration. In the year 1672, Gian Giorgio Cubergi made a survey of Salona, by order of the Venetian senate—which, however, like those made in 1821 and 1825, had no truth in them. The leading idea and the success of Professor Carrara's late labours, consist in ascertaining first, the extent and limits of the ancient city, to which other endeavours are made subservient. This he accomplished by commencing his labours *beyond* the actual traces of the walls all around the city, by which doing he discovered the old *gates*, and laid bare, as it were, the line of circumvallation in its very nakedness; and *thus* rendered the making of the plan a simple surveying operation. Every other mode of procedure would have been fallacious, as only the discovery of the gates and portals could lead to the direction of the main streets. The plan is now ready,* and exhibits the form of a truncated cone, and the broader line towards the east, is a prolongation of the original city, with which it was connected by a great interior portal. The old city rose successively to a great elevation, and the north walls are much higher than those towards the south, which extend along the river and the sea.

It is in the north-east corner of the city, where the excavation of the city walls is the most conspicuous. There are the ruins of the old gate which led through the Via Gabiana to Andentium, which bears the character of the known solidity of Roman construction. On continuing to proceed in this direction, it is to be seen, that the city had for its protection, square towers of divers size, from 12 to 98 feet in height. On looking on these, one would wonder how one of these ancient War-engines (*aries*) could injure such a building, if we did not consider, that if any of the corner or key-stones were displaced, the whole would lose its solidity and come down; thence the importance laid in Scripture on the 'corner stone.' To these Roman towers some more recent (barbarian) masonry has been added. The old structure consists entirely of large square stone blocks, some of ten feet length. In the barbarian structures, only the facings are of hewn stone, the interior consisting of rough materials and mortar.

On the north side of the city, near the wall, an interesting bath has been excavated, shewing clearly, that the oriental bath of to-day is the same as that of ancient times. Like in the present Turkish bath, the *mughtas* in the centre had its tube for conducting the hot water; the floor is of polished marble, the columns supporting the roof of oriental alabaster, and the mosaic, in one of the side cabinets, is as perfect as if completed yesterday. Near the bath, the gate which served as a communication between the old and new city, has been excavated and laid bare. The pavement is impressed with parallel traces of wheels, like in Pompeii, but the stones are longer and more used. The aqueduct was laid above the portal.

On the north-west corner of the city, lie the amphitheatre, which forms an ellipse 126 feet long, and is well preserved. The entrance is paved with stones, of which some are 10 feet by 4, and by a lattice-work (made of stone), the wild animals could be conveniently viewed. The use of stone and iron, is (in most cases), based on the climate, and certainly, the solid, sturdy walls of the Romans, are the best antidote against the heat of summer. The issues and stairs give a pretty clear idea of what the theatre has been; but as the greatest portion of its walls formed also the city wall, this may explain why it possesses no especial architectural ornament.

On the west side of Salona, lie the ruins of a gigantic structure, whose use and destination, however, are hitherto unknown to Mr. Carrara and other antiquaries, who had seen them. It is a wall 580 feet long, a cyclopic work, consisting of regular, square stone slabs, each of from 8 feet to 10 feet long. It may be the foundation of some huge temple, which further research can only duly ascertain.

It is within the precincts of the Temple of

* See p. 360 in the present Number

* The present observations are made according to the MSS. of Professor Carrara, to be laid before the meeting of Italian scientists, at Venice.

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